

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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R 251248Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2934

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FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO DACCA FROM CALCUTTA
APRIL 22, 1977 REPEATED FOR YOUR ACTION

QUOTE
CALCUTTA 0971

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN
SUBJ: CRITICISM OF FARAKKA AGREEMENT

1. BENGALI LANGUAGE JUGANTAR APRIL 22 CARRIES A BRIEF ITEM
ON INSIDE PAGE HEADLINED "WEST BENGAL ANGRY OVER GANGES
WATER". STORY SAYS THE STATE GOVERNMENT RESENTS THE GOI
DECISION ON DIVISION OF GANGES WATERS WITH BANGLADESH.
QUOTS A GOWB SPOKESMAN AS SAYING "THE CALCUTTA PORT WILL
BE FINISHED IF ONLY 22,000 CUSECS OF WATER IS RELEASED TO
THE HOOGLHY DURING THE THREE MONTHS OF THE LEAN PERIOD."

2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA APRIL 22 CARRIES
TWO COLUMN STORY ON FRONT PAGE HEADLINED "FARAKKA ACCORD:
EXPERTS WORRIED OVER FATE OF CALCUTTA PORT." STORY SAYS
THAT WHILE DETAILS OF THE INDO-BANGLADESH AGREEMENT REACHED
IN DACCA RECENTLY HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE PUBLIC, INFORMA-
TION FROM KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES IS THAT INDIA HAS AGREED TO
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CUT DOWN ITS OFFTAKE VIA FARAKKA TO "LESS THAN 20,000
CUSECS" DURING THE LEAN MONTHS. THIS HAS CAUSED "SERIOUS
CONCERN" IN CALCUTTA. SUCH ACTION WOULD "SOUND THE DEATH
KNELL OF THE VITAL CALCUTTA PORT IN NO DISTANT FUTURE....
IF THIS PORT DIES IT WILL NOT ONLY BE A GREAT CALAMITY FOR
THIS COUNTRY BUT A LOSS TO WORLD SHIPPING." PAPER SAYS DE-
TAILS OF THE INDO-BANGLADESH AGREEMENT ARE BEING ANXIOUSLY

AWAITED IN CALCUTTA. "ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE PORT WOULD BE REVIVED WITH THE FLOW OF ADEQUATE WATER THROUGH THE HOOGLY THERE HAVE BEEN TREMENDOUS INVESTMENTS FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS IN THE EASTERN REGION....THESE VITAL PROJECTS ARE BOUND TO FACE A SLOW DEATH IF CALCUTTA PORT DIES. IN ADDITION, THE HALDIA PORT WILL ALSO NOT THRIVE IF THIS PORT IS NOT FED WITH A REGULAR FLOW OF WATER."

3. AMRITA SAYS REPEATED STUDIES BY INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS HAVE SHOWN THAT 40,000 CUSECS DURING THE LEAN PERIOD "IS A MUST" FOR CALCUTTA PORT'S SURVIVAL. UNFORTUNATELY THE INDO-BANGLADESH AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITHOUT ANY PRIOR CONSULTATION OF PORT AUTHORITIES AND VARIOUS INTERESTED GOI AGENCIES SUCH AS MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT. AMRITA QUOTES AN UNNAMED "NOTED HYDRAULIC EXPERT" AS SAYING THAT INDO-BANGLADESH AGREEMENT WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH HYDRAULIC EXPERTS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL "IS DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF THE STATE AND ALSO THE PORT WHICH SERVES NORTH-EASTERN INDIA." IF 40,000 CUSECS OF WATER ARE NOT AVAILABLE FROM FARAKKA DURING THE DRY SEASON, EXPERT SAID, "THE EFFECT WOULD BE DISASTROUS." HOOGLY WOULD BE SILTED, ITS SALINITY WOULD INCREASE AND PEOPLE OF CALCUTTA WOULD BE DENIED DRINKING WATER.

4. NO OTHER NEGATIVE PRESS COMMENT SO FAR. WE EXPECT TO BE SEEING SHIPPING AND PORT EXECUTIVES EARLY NEXT WEEK. SIGNED KORN

UNQUOTE

SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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